

UNDERSTANDING FIELD OF STUDY AND CAREER FIELD

Gaining an understanding of one's field of study and the possible career fields is a crucial aspect in the modern world as it allows the persons concerned to match their knowledge and competencies with viable professional backgrounds. The field of study to consider in this context is a physician assistant position. A physician assistant is a healthcare practitioner who offers healthcare services within the medical setup as part of a team with other physicians. Physician assistants usually work under the supervision of more experienced healthcare practitioners, including surgeons and doctors. In addition, they may specialize in a wide range of areas, such as emergency care, pediatric care, as well as primary medical care. Physician assistants are usually concerned with the prevention and treatment of illnesses and injury by offering a wide variety of healthcare services, all under the supervision of higher-ranking physicians. However, the scope of their practice varies according to the healthcare setting and jurisdiction, with some of the physician assistant positions requiring registered licenses in the specialty concerned. Ultimately, their work may include the conduction of physical exams, diagnosis, conduction and interpretation of medical tests, development of treatment schedules, prescription of medications, as well as offering surgery assistance. Secondary careers that have job duties similar to those of physician assistants include occupational therapists, registered nurses, as well as physical therapist careers.

History of the Field

The physician assistant career was first adopted in the United States in 1961 when proposals were made to the American Medical Association to create new positions of doctor assistants (Mullan 246). Such assistants were to be derived from non-nursing and non-medical personnel in healthcare institutions. By 1965, the first lot of physician assistants had been

appointed in the U.S. Navy Hospital. Furthermore, the curriculum of physician assistant students was based on the knowledge and skills that were required in fast-track teaching of medical doctors in the operations carried out in the Second World War (Mullan 247). During the World War II, medical doctors were in dire need of assistants and thus, they had to devise a way through which they could train such assistants. As a result, the physician assistant idea was established and programs launched to train such medical personnel. Although the physician assistant field of study and work practice has historically been dominated by men, the contemporary healthcare setting in the United States has it that more than 60% of the physical assistants are women. Such is a true evidence even in the nursing field in the contemporary medical work setting.

Career Options in the Field

There are different career options in the field of physician assistants. Such fields include nurse anesthetists and occupational therapists. Nurse anesthetists are usually referred to as advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) in the context of the medical field in the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics 1). Their main duty is to coordinate different forms of patient care while aiming at providing specialty and primary healthcare. In addition, the scope of their practice is based on the rules and regulations governing the medical profession in the different states.

On the other hand, occupational therapists are usually charged with the duty of treating injuries and disabilities that some patients might have in their different situations. Their responsibilities are carried out through the therapeutic application of everyday activities. In this view, their duty is to help patients to recover while developing skills that enable them to gain physical energy to carry out their daily activities (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2). From this point

of view, occupational therapists are more specialized to physical healthcare, especially outside the healthcare institution's environment while nurse anesthetists are specialized and based within the health institutions. In addition, nurse anesthetists can carry out diagnosis, test analysis, as well as make treatment plans for the patients, which in turn makes their work more diversified as compared to that of occupational therapists (Alperin and Rose 277).

Future of the Career

The future of the career of physician assistants is faced by different prospects of advancement. Such might include increasing patient demands and expectations. In most instances in the contemporary medical setting, patients are gaining more awareness about their health and factors that affect it (Jenkins 7). As a result, patients continue to demand more services, while becoming more concerned about the quality of the services offered by medical practitioners. In this view, the area of physician assistant is becoming more demanding and thus, the future will be faced by the prospect of development as a result of such increase in demand of the services offered by these professionals. Additionally, the contemporary world is faced by increasing advancements in information technology. Information technology advancements are creating better opportunities for healthcare institutions, which in turn leads to increasing dynamic nature of medical professions. In this context, the physician assistant position will require to become more innovation-oriented. Additionally, advancement in information technology has led to increased availability and accessibility of information, where such information plays a key role in decision making and problem solving in the medical field. Physician assistants could apply such technological advancements as the Internet in the future to make more effective decisions and solve more complex problems in the medical setup.

As a result of these prospects of advancements in the physician assistant position, different changes might occur in the future. On one hand, physician assistants may be required to undergo a specialty internship before they are enrolled in healthcare institutions (Jenkins 19). Such a program will enable them to develop special skills and competencies in a specific field of healthcare. As a result, they will be able to handle specific patient needs without the need for guidance from more experienced medical practitioners. Additionally, the increasing patient needs in the contemporary society will require physician assistants to be skilled and knowledgeable in specific areas as opposed to the general medical field. They will thus be able to provide specialized healthcare to the patients, which in turn will lead to the provision of high-quality services in the future.

In addition, there will be increasing demand for more physician practitioners in the future. Such increasing demand will be as a result of the increasing needs by patients across the nation. Generally, the global population is growing and thus, there will be a growing trend in the number of healthcare institutions across the world (Alperin and Rose 112). As a result, there will be a growing demand of healthcare services thus, resulting to an increasing in the need for more healthcare professionals to cater for the growing population. In this view, the demand for such healthcare professionals as physician assistants will be growing in the future and thus, there has to be a change in the number of physician assistants in the healthcare institutions.

Other changes that could occur in the field of physician assistant is the formation of professional bodies for physician assistants. There is increasing need for physician assistants to band together and become active in campaigning for the profession. It is only through advocating for recognition that the actual importance of the profession in the medical field will be realized and commensurately rewarded. In most instances, other professions form professional bodies

that set the regulations that should govern the actions of the members while also aiming at protecting the rights of such members. By advocating for the formation of professional bodies, physician assistants will be able to gain the recognition in the modern medical field that they deserve and which will be similar to other professionals in the medical field.

Recommendations

The field of physician assistant is growing by day given the increasing demand for medical services for the modern growing global population. One aspect that is interesting for physician assistant positions in healthcare institutions is the opportunity to serve other people, especially at their desperate circumstances. By being a physician assistant, one is able to interact with highly qualified medical professionals thus getting the opportunity to gain better knowledge and skills. In this view, physician assistant field of study enables one to develop in the course of carrying out their assigned duties. Interested people in this field of study can develop their interest by gathering information from the wide range of information provided in medical websites over the Internet (Bureau of Labor Statistics 8). Additionally, interested parties need to study the medical field from such the wide range of sources, including medical books and journals. Such sources of information will provide a good platform to develop one's skills and knowledge in the medical field. Additionally, interested people can gain more information on their related areas of study through mentorship programs where they can interact with more experienced professionals in the medical field. Such experienced medical professionals can also act as mentors for students who are looking forward to joining the profession in the future. Following the research on the field of physician assistant, it is important to note that the most viable career option in this field is nurse anesthetist. Through this career option, one will be able to gather a wider range of medical information as they will gain skills in diagnosis, testing, as

well as enhancing treatment plans for patients and thus, they might develop in the future to become physicians. Indeed the physician assistant field of study is essential for the development of excellent medical knowledge and skills.

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